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DD/A Registry  
83-0395

ODP-83-209

4 FEB 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director

VIA: Deputy Director for Administration

FROM: [REDACTED]

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Director of Data Processing

SUBJECT:

Supercomputers [REDACTED]

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REFERENCE:

Multiple Addressee Memorandum, from  
[REDACTED] Chief, Policy and Planning  
Staff, ICS, dtd 26 January 1983, Same Subject,  
DCI/IC 83-4224

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Action Requested

1. Paragraph 6 is a recommendation that you sign the memorandum at Attachment I. This memorandum is in response to the Reference request from [REDACTED] of the IC Staff for answers to a series of questions on Agency use of supercomputers, and the U.S. Government role in encouraging domestic supercomputer development. Due to the time limitation for coordination and preparation of the response, the information and positions presented must be viewed as tentative. [REDACTED]

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Background

2. As the Reference indicates, an "Ad hoc Committee on Supercomputers," chaired by [REDACTED] Assistant Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy (O/S&TP) met on 24 January to review supercomputer issues. The Intelligence Community was represented by [REDACTED] Chief, Policy and Planning Staff, ICS. [REDACTED] tasked committee members to respond to a set of questions by 7 February. The Office of Data Processing was, in turn, tasked by the CIA Executive Secretariat with providing an Agency response. In the limited time available, we have done our best to informally touch base and solicit the opinions of key DDI and DDS&T players. [REDACTED]

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3. In our judgment, there are two key points from an Agency perspective. First, we are in the process of evaluating Agency requirements for a supercomputer. The Information Handling

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from attachments.

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Systems Architect Staff believed such a requirement existed. His draft plan envisioned a \$60 million dollar, six-year program to implement a supercomputer capability in CIA. At this point, however, detailed supporting documentation for the requirement does not exist. There is an ongoing DDI and ODP effort to collect and refine requirements. DDI is, in fact, contemplating obtaining contractual support for this effort. ORD is also engaged in evaluating the performance of the Cray-1 supercomputer as compared to top-of-the-line IBM computers, as well as investigating the software conversion implications in the use of these machines (see Attachment II). One thing is clear, however, a supercomputer capability, if required, will not come cheap. The costs of hardware, software and operations will be high. Obtaining the necessary additional highly-skilled personnel and requisite space will also be a difficult task. [REDACTED]

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4. The second point to be noted is the security implications inherent in the use of foreign-manufactured ADP equipment. Headquarters Notice [REDACTED] generally prohibits the use of "foreign ADP resources." A Japanese manufactured supercomputer, for example, would certainly fall under the purview of that notice. The issue with use of a Japanese supercomputer by the Agency is not primarily one of economics ("Buy America") but one of security. Use of a foreign-manufactured supercomputer would increase our vulnerability to the actions of a hostile intelligence service. (Examples are: covert modifications to capture data or deny use of the machine; denial of support or access to follow-on technology, etc.) If a solid supercomputer requirement is identified, a domestic machine would clearly be preferable, if not a necessity. [REDACTED]

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5. In preparing the attached response, we have had considerable discussions with DDS&T and DDI personnel. We have not, however, had time for formal coordination. The last two questions were particularly difficult ones. Question F in the Reference relates to the Federal Government's role in stimulating supercomputer development. Due to the limited time available and the complexity of this issue, we feel that it is inappropriate to present a detailed Agency position. We have, however, emphasized the importance of domestic sources from a security perspective and the resulting implication that the existence of domestic sources cannot prudently be left to market forces alone. For Question G, on the probable success of Japanese supercomputer efforts, we have relied solely on the input of the Office of Global Issues, DDI. [REDACTED]

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Recommendation

6. It is recommended that you sign the attached response to  
[redacted] questions on Agency use of supercomputers, and the  
U.S. Government role in the development of domestic  
supercomputers. [redacted]

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Attachments: a/s

cc:

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SUBJECT: Supercomputers [redacted]

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ODP/MS [redacted] (4Feb83)(Super)(v-3 disk and B-2  
disk)

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